

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 4, 2017

U.S. Interior Department Rejects Unity Council Appeal in Cayuga Nation Leadership Dispute

Cayuga Nation Files Complaint in State Supreme Court Seeking Return of Assets and Monetary Damages

Yesterday, the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA) rejected an appeal by a group of Cayuga Nation members calling themselves the “Unity Council.” The appeal challenged a July 14 decision by Michael Black, the Acting Assistant Secretary –Indian Affairs for the U.S. Department of the Interior, to formally recognize the Cayuga Nation Council as the official governing body of the Cayuga Nation.

This Unity Council appeal alleged that Michael Black was re-assigned by the Interior Department in June and, therefore, was not authorized to issue his July 14 decision, as Acting Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs. In its decision issued on August 3, 2017, the IBIA rejected this argument, based on a series of orders by the Secretary of the Interior that confirmed Black’s authority to issue the Cayuga Nation recognition decision.

As recognized by the Federal government, the Cayuga Nation Council is led by Clint Halftown, Tim Twoguns, Gary Wheeler, Donald Jimerson, and Michael Barringer.

In a second development, the Cayuga Nation Council filed a complaint this morning in New York State Supreme Court, seeking the return of Nation properties, inventory, and other assets that were illegally removed from Nation control in the spring of 2014. These properties include several Nation-owned businesses, offices, and a security trailer located in Seneca County.

The Nation’s complaint also seeks monetary damages from the Cayuga and non-Cayuga individuals who have been in possession of these properties and assets and seized them for their own personal use and benefit.